

May 19, 2020

**Via email: [premier@ontario.ca](mailto:premier@ontario.ca)**

The Honourable Doug Ford  
Premier of Ontario  
Legislative Building  
Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A1

Dear Premier Ford,

The United Steelworkers and our members, including employees of several long-term care facilities in Ontario, are profoundly concerned at your government's rejection of widespread calls for a public inquiry into the long-term care crisis in our province. We respectfully urge you and your government to reconsider this ill-advised decision.

Subsequent to my letter sent to you on May 15, 2020, I reiterate the strongly held belief of my union – including our members who experience first-hand the failings of the system, who comfort dying residents in their final moments and who witness the suffering of families that have lost loved ones – that the growing demand for a public inquiry could not be more justified.

As you well know Premier, public inquiries have been held into many crises in our province and our country that pale in comparison to the devastating human toll that Ontario's long-term care crisis has wreaked.

Premier, how is a public inquiry not justified in light of the unprecedented tragedies that have struck our long-term care system? How is a public inquiry not justified when more than 1,400 residents have died and thousands more residents and workers have been infected with COVID-19?

Appointing a commission to simply “review the long-term care system” is an injustice to the grieving families and to all residents and workers who continue to be affected by this crisis and the failings of a system that has harmed so many, for so long.

Unlike a public inquiry, the proposed review of the system will remain under the control of the government. Ultimately, the government will be able to exercise control over the facts, information and evidence that will be explored, scrutinized and released to the public.

In contrast, a public inquiry is truly independent of government and protected from any interference or influence of any party.

Only a public inquiry has the power to compel testimony and the production of documents and other evidence.

Critically, a public inquiry allows for the broadest-possible public participation, through a transparent, public process.

It is important to dismiss the false narrative that a public inquiry will be too time-consuming in identifying and addressing the failings in the long-term care system. As the Official Opposition has pointed out, a public inquiry can be empowered to recommend immediate action, at any time during the process, to address such issues.

Premier, only a public inquiry will bring meaningful, lasting improvements to the level of care and safety, indeed the very quality of life, that are deserved by all residents in Ontario's long-term care system.

Only a public inquiry will allow for true healing to begin for those who have lost loved ones and who, at the very least, are owed a sense of knowing their loss, their pain and grief were not in vain.

Only a public inquiry will restore the confidence of the people of Ontario in our long-term care system.

Premier, we urge you and your government to reconsider your decision and to establish a public inquiry in the most-timely manner possible.

Sincerely,

Marty Warren  
Ontario Director,  
United Steelworkers